



VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM 2007 Annual Program Activity Report

Summary

Volunteers are vital to the effective operation of California State Parks – and their commitment to helping meet the department's mission is truly extraordinary. In calendar year 2007, **15,411** dedicated individuals provided **984,538 hours** of service, representing an equivalent dollar value to the department of over **\$19 million**.* The attached charts summarize 2007 volunteer activity and overall trends over the past decade.

After reaching a record in 2006, the total number of state parks volunteers dropped by 9% - to 15,411 - in 2007. At the same time, however, the total hours served by volunteers increased by 7%, to 984,538 hours, slightly below the department's national record high of 1 million volunteer hours recorded in 1997. The average number of 64 hours donated annually per volunteer remained comparable to previous years' averages.

Interpretation continued to represent the largest category of volunteer service, comprising nearly 30% of all volunteer hours. Similarly, campground and park hosts and volunteers performing other public contact functions combined for almost 30% of total volunteer hours.

Staff Support

The dedicated staff who administered the Volunteers in Parks Program in 2007 deserves special acknowledgment. The number of field employees managing volunteers decreased by 4%, from 743 to 713, while the number of staff hours devoted to volunteer administration increased by 24%, to 116,357 hours. Each staff hour expended yielded over 8 hours of volunteer service. Twenty-four park employees attended training in volunteer program administration conducted by the Mott Training Center in the Two Rivers Training Facility, October 15 – 19, 2007.

Special Events

Earth Day, Trails Day, Coastal Cleanup Day and other one-day or weekend special events attracted nearly 9,000 short-term volunteers. Working collaboratively with the California State Parks Foundation and other co-sponsors, California State Parks continued to engage individuals throughout the state in maintaining trails, cleaning up our parks and beaches, and producing living history demonstrations, among a variety of activities.

Volunteer Recognition

During 2007, Department staff presented 69 Poppy Awards - a record number - and 10 Volunteer Medallions to outstanding volunteers.

Volunteer Enhancement Program

Proposition 12, approved by voters in 2000, allocated \$4 million to the Volunteer Enhancement Program, allowing the department to fund six projects totaling \$196,000 in FY 06/07. Districts used VEP funds to upgrade facilities, develop or improve camp host sites, and support other projects that helped enhance our parks and increase volunteer participation.

Program Contact

If you have questions about this report, please contact Margo Cowan at (916) 653-8819 or by e-mail at mcowan@parks.ca.gov.

* The 2007 volunteer service hour is based on the private sector value of \$19.51 per hour, as reported by the Independent Sector, derived from private non-farm payroll determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor.